

**The Bantu attribute noun class prefixes and their
suffixal counterparts, with special reference to Zulu**

A mini dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment
of the requirements for the degree

Magister Artium: IsiZulu (course work)

in the Department of African Languages at the

UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA

by

LINKIE MOHLALA

Supervisor: Prof R Gauton

May 2003

DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my late sister CONSTANCE POLELO MASHILWANE who passed away on the 10 August 1982. I shall never forget her words of wisdom that says: “Education makes ones life richer for life. For what you have learnt give shape to your life, and it is a gift no one can ever take away from you.” Sleep well now that I have learnt to understand what you meant.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank Prof. R. Gauton for leading me throughout this research. Without her enthusiastic guidance, I would not have been able to complete this study. Together with Prof. D. Prinsloo, Prof. R. Gauton allowed me to use the Department of African Languages computers to type and arrange my work in a professional manner. To them I say: *“Ningalahli futhi ningadinwa. Nangomuso anokwenza kanjalo nakwabanye. Ukwanda kwaliwa umthakathi.”*

I would also like thank my husband, Lucas, for his support throughout my studies, and my daughters, Mapule and Matshepo, for understanding when I had to leave them in order to pursue my studies full time, especially Matshepo, who was doing her matriculation by then. Not forgetting my mother, Mary, my sisters, Eleanor, Bathabile, Rebone, and my brother Okie, for their moral support throughout my studies.

I would like to pass words of gratitude to Mr. Shamba Mthembu, SADTU Mpumalanga Province secretary, for his confidence in me, not forgetting to thank the teachers of Eerstelingsfontein school, Maureen, Thoko and Muntu for their dedication to teaching my classes during my absence.

My thanks are also conveyed to my friends Salminah Nong, Paulinah Mogodi and Mr. M.J. Dlomo, for being there for me. Not forgetting Gilles-Maurice de Schryver who assisted me with the final computational arrangement of this work, and whose presence in the corner office made working overtime so enjoyable.

I would also like to thank the library of the University of Pretoria, which assisted me with all the sources for my research.

Finally I wish to thank God for giving me strength, perseverance, and courage to work on this research.

SUMMARY

The aim of this dissertation is to investigate the attributive noun classes, as well as their suffixal counterparts, firstly in Bantu, and secondly in Zulu. The investigation will be done with reference to aspects such as the following: the general distribution, meaning and function of the attributive noun class prefixes in Bantu. This study will also investigate the distinction between those prefixes which are exclusively used to categorise size and shape deviations, namely those belonging to classes 12/13, 19, 20, 21 and 22; and those class prefixes which have a secondary function of indicating such deviations, namely the prefixes of classes 5/6, 7/8 and 11. The main concern is the way in which these prefixes are often associated with positive or negative emotive perceptions regarding size and shape, and are therefore often used to express amelioration and derogation. In languages such as Zulu and Northern Sotho the existence of possible frozen remnants of such attributive noun class prefixes will be investigated.

Some Bantu languages such as Venda that express variations in size and shape as well as the emotive perception by means of suffixes, or by a combination of prefixes and suffixes will be investigated. The possible semantic overlap between the meanings expressed by attributive class prefixes, and/or between the meanings expressed by attributive class prefixes and so-called 'attributive suffixes' will also be scrutinized.

Apart from the aspects mentioned above, the relationship between augmentative and diminutive suffixes and the notion [+ feminine] in languages such as Zulu and Northern Sotho will be scrutinized. The occurrence of the Zulu suffix *-azana/-azane*, which is apparently a combination of the diminutive and augmentative suffixes, will also be investigated.

This study will firstly provide a typological overview of the various strategies employed in Bantu in order to express variations in shape and size, as well as of the emotive perceptions that accompany such variations. Secondly, this study will provide an insight into the way in which shape and size variations, amelioration and derogation are

expressed in Zulu through the utilisation of diminutive and augmentative suffixes. An indication will also be given of the possible diachronic development of attributive categories in this language. This study will make a significant contribution not only to the field of diachronic and comparative Bantu linguistics, but also to Zulu linguistics. This research will furthermore lead to a deeper understanding of the strategies employed in Zulu to express the semantic nuances of amelioration and derogation.

Key words

Bantu

Linguistics

Amelioration

Derogation

Attributive noun classes

Emotive perceptions

Semantic overlap

Attributive suffixes

Attributive prefixes

Secondary function

OPSOMMING

Die doel van hierdie verhandeling is om die attributiewe naamwoordprefikse te ondersoek asook hulle suffigale teenhangers, eerstens in Bantu en tweedens in Zulu. Die ondersoek word gedoen met verwysing na die volgende aspekte: die algemene verspreiding, betekenis en gebruik van hierdie klasprefikse in Bantu. Hierdie studie sal ook die onderskeid tussen daardie klasprefikse wat uitsluitlik gebruik word om grootte asook vormlike afwykings te kategoriseer, naamlik dié van klasse 12/13, 19, 20, 21 en 22, asook die klasprefikse van klasse 5/6, 7/8 en 11 wat 'n sekondere funksie het om sulke afwykings aan te toon, ondersoek. Die moontlike aanwesigheid van die reste van sulke klasprefikse in tale soos Noord-Sotho en Zulu word ook ondersoek.

Sekere Bantutale soos Venda waarin die wisseling in grootte en vorm asook die emosionele waarneming van sulke variasies deur middel van suffikse (agtervoegsels) uitgedruk word, of deur 'n kombinasie van beide 'n prefiks en 'n suffiks, word ook ondersoek. Die moontlike semantiese oorvleueling tussen die betekenisse wat deur die attributiewe klasprefikse, en/of die sogenaamde attributiewe suffikse uitgedruk word, word ook onder die loep geneem.

Bo en behalwe die voorafgaande aspekte, word die verhouding tussen die ougmentatiewe en diminutiewe agtervoegsels asook die begrip [+vroulik] in tale soos Zulu en Noord-Sotho ondersoek. Die voorkoms van die agtervoegsels *-azana/azane*, wat blykbaar 'n kombinasie van die diminutiewe en ougmentatiewe agtervoegsels is, word ook ondersoek.

Hierdie studie poog in die eerste plek om 'n tipologiese oorsig te gee van die verskillende strategieë wat in die Bantutale gebruik word om die wisseling in grootte en vorm uit te druk, asook die gevoelswaarde wat met sulke wisselinge gepaardgaan. In die tweede plek, poog hierdie studie om insig te gee in die verskillende wyses waarop variasie in grootte, vertedering en veragting in Zulu deur middel van die diminutiewe en ougmentatiewe agtervoegsels weergegee word. Daar word ook gepoog om 'n aanduiding

te gee van die moontlike historiese ontwikkeling van die sogenaamde attributiewe klasse in hierdie taal. Hierdie studie sal 'n betekenisvolle bydrae maak, nie net tot die historiese en vergelykende Bantutaalstudie nie, maar ook tot die taalkundige studie van Zulu. Hierdie navorsing behoort tot dieper insig te lei van die strategieë wat in Zulu gebruik word ten einde die betekenisnuanses van vertedering en veragting weer te gee.

Sleutelsterme

Bantu

Taalkunde

Vertedering

Veragting

Attributiewe naamwoordklasse

Emosionele waarneming

Semantiese oorvleueling

Attributiewe klasprefikse

Attributiewe suffikse

Sekondêre funksie

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CONTENTS.....	PAGES
CHAPTER 1	1
1.1 INTRODUCTION	1
1.2 PROBLEM IDENTIFICATION.....	2
1.3 DEMARCATON OF STUDY: AIMS AND OBJECTIVES	3
1.4 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	4
1.5 SIGNIFICANCE AND SCHEME OF WORK	4
CHAPTER 2	6
THE DISTRIBUTION, MEANING AND FUNCTION OF THE ATTRIBUTIVE NOUN CLASS PREFIXES OF BANTU.....	6
2.1 INTRODUCTION	6
2.2 THE CONTINUUM INTERPRETATION OF THE BANTU NOUN CLASS SYSTEM.....	7
2.3 ATTRIBUTIVE NOUN CLASSES AS DEFINED IN HENDRIKSE & POULOS' (1990) CONTINUUM INTERPRETATION OF THE BANTU NOUN CLASSES	11
2.4 THE BANTU NOUN CLASS PREFIXES WITH THE SECONDARY FUNCTION OF REFLECTING SIZE AND SHAPE DEVIATION.....	14
2.5 THE BANTU NOUN CLASS PREFIXES THAT ARE EXCLUSIVELY USED TO CATEGORIZE SIZE AND SHAPE DEVIATIONS	20
2.6 THE EXPRESSION OF AMELIORATION IN BANTU THROUGH THE USE OF NOUN CLASS PREFIXES	23
2.6.1 The expression of amelioration in Bantu through the use of the diminutive noun class prefixes.....	23
2.6.2 The expression of amelioration in Bantu through the use of augmentative noun class prefixes	25
2.7 THE EXPRESSION OF DEROGATION IN BANTU THROUGH THE USE OF NOUN CLASS PREFIXES	26

2.7.1	The expression of derogation in Bantu through the use of diminutive noun class prefixes.....	26
2.7.2	The expression of derogation in Bantu through the use of augmentative noun class prefixes	27
2.8	SUMMARY	28
CHAPTER 3		30
THE EXISTENCE OF POSSIBLE FROZEN REMNANTS OF ATTRIBUTIVE NOUN CLASS PREFIXES.....		30
3.1	INTRODUCTION	30
3.2	THE POSITION IN ZULU	30
3.2.1	Wilkes' (1990) view of the existence of possible frozen remnants of attributive noun class prefixes.in Zulu.....	32
3.3	THE SUFFIXAL STRATEGY AS A MEANS TO EXPRESS AMELIORATION AND DEROGATION.....	34
3.3.1	The suffix <i>-ana</i> in Zulu	35
3.3.1.1	The expression of amelioration by the diminutive suffix <i>-ana</i>	36
3.3.1.2	The expression of derogation by the diminutive suffix <i>-ana</i>	38
3.3.2	The suffix <i>-kazi</i> in Zulu.....	40
3.3.2.1	The expression of amelioration by the augmentative suffix <i>-kazi</i>	41
3.3.2.2	The expression of derogation by the augmentative suffix <i>-kazi</i>	45
3.4	THE POSITION IN NORTHERN SOTHO.....	46
3.5	THE POSSIBLE EXISTENCE OF THE RELICS OF AN EMOTIVE NOUN CLASS IN NORTHERN SOTHO	48
3.6	THE SUFFIXAL STRATEGY AS A MEANS TO EXPRESS AMELIORATION AND DEROGATION IN NORTHERN SOTHO	49
3.6.1	The expression of amelioration by the diminutive suffix	49
3.6.2	The expression of derogation by the diminutive suffix	50
3.6.3	The expression of amelioration by the augmentative suffix.....	50
3.7	SUMMARY	52

CHAPTER 4	54
THE USE OF A COMBINATION OF PREFIXES AND SUFFIXES IN THE EXPRESSION OF VARIATIONS IN SIZE AND SHAPE, AMELIORATION AND DEROGATION IN BANTU	54
4.1 INTRODUCTION	54
4.2 THE EXPRESSION OF VARIATIONS IN SIZE AND SHAPE BY MEANS OF SUFFIXES IN SHONA AND VENDA	55
4.2.1 The diminutive suffix in Venda	55
4.2.2 The diminutive suffix in Shona.....	57
4.2.3 The semantic implications of the diminutive suffix in Venda and Shona	57
4.3 THE EXPRESSION OF VARIATIONS IN SIZE AND SHAPE BY MEANS OF A COMBINATION OF PREFIXES AND SUFFIXES IN BANTU	59
4.3.1 The combination of the prefixes and the suffixes in Venda	59
4.3.2 The combination of the prefixes and suffixes in Shona.....	61
4.3.3 The semantic implications of the combination of both the prefix and the suffix in Venda and in Shona.....	62
4.4 SUMMARY.....	64
CHAPTER 5	66
THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN AUGMENTATIVE AND DIMINUTIVE SUFFIXES AND THE NOTION [+FEMININE]	66
5.1 INTRODUCTION	66
5.2 THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE AUGMENTATIVE SUFFIX AND THE NOTION [+FEMININE] IN ZULU	66
5.3 THE OCCURRENCE OF THE ZULU FEMININE SUFFIX <i>-AZANA / -AZANE</i> , AND <i>-KAZANA/E</i> , APPARENTLY A COMBINATION OF THE AUGMENTATIVE AND THE DIMINUTIVE SUFFIXES	70
5.4 THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE AUGMENTATIVE SUFFIX AND THE NOTION [+FEMININE] IN NORTHERN SOTHO.....	73

5.5	THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE DIMINUTIVE SUFFIX AND THE NOTION [+FEMININE] IN NORTHERN SOTHO.....	74
5.6	SUMMARY	74
CHAPTER 6		77
THE POSSIBLE SEMANTIC OVERLAP BETWEEN THE MEANINGS EXPRESSED BY ATTRIBUTIVE CLASS PREFIXES, AND/OR BETWEEN THE MEANINGS EXPRESSED BY ATTRIBUTIVE CLASS PREFIXES AND SO-CALLED "ATTRIBUTIVE SUFFIXES"		77
6.1	INTRODUCTION.....	77
6.2	THE POSSIBLE SEMANTIC OVERLAP BETWEEN THE MEANINGS EXPRESSED BY THE ATTRIBUTIVE CLASS PREFIXES, THE ATTRIBUTIVE SUFFIXES, AND / OR BETWEEN THE MEANINGS EXPRESSED BY THE ATTRIBUTIVE CLASS PREFIXES AND SO-CALLED ATTRIBUTIVE SUFFIXES.....	78
6.3	THE SEMANTIC IMPLICATIONS EXPRESSED BY THE ATTRIBUTIVE PREFIXES.....	78
6.3.1	The semantic implications of the diminutive prefixes.....	78
6.3.2	The semantic implications of augmentative prefixes.....	81
6.4	THE SEMANTIC IMPLICATIONS OF THE ATTRIBUTIVE SUFFIXES	82
6.5	SUMMARY.....	83
7.	BIBLIOGRAPHY	85